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19 July 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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***Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EDT)**

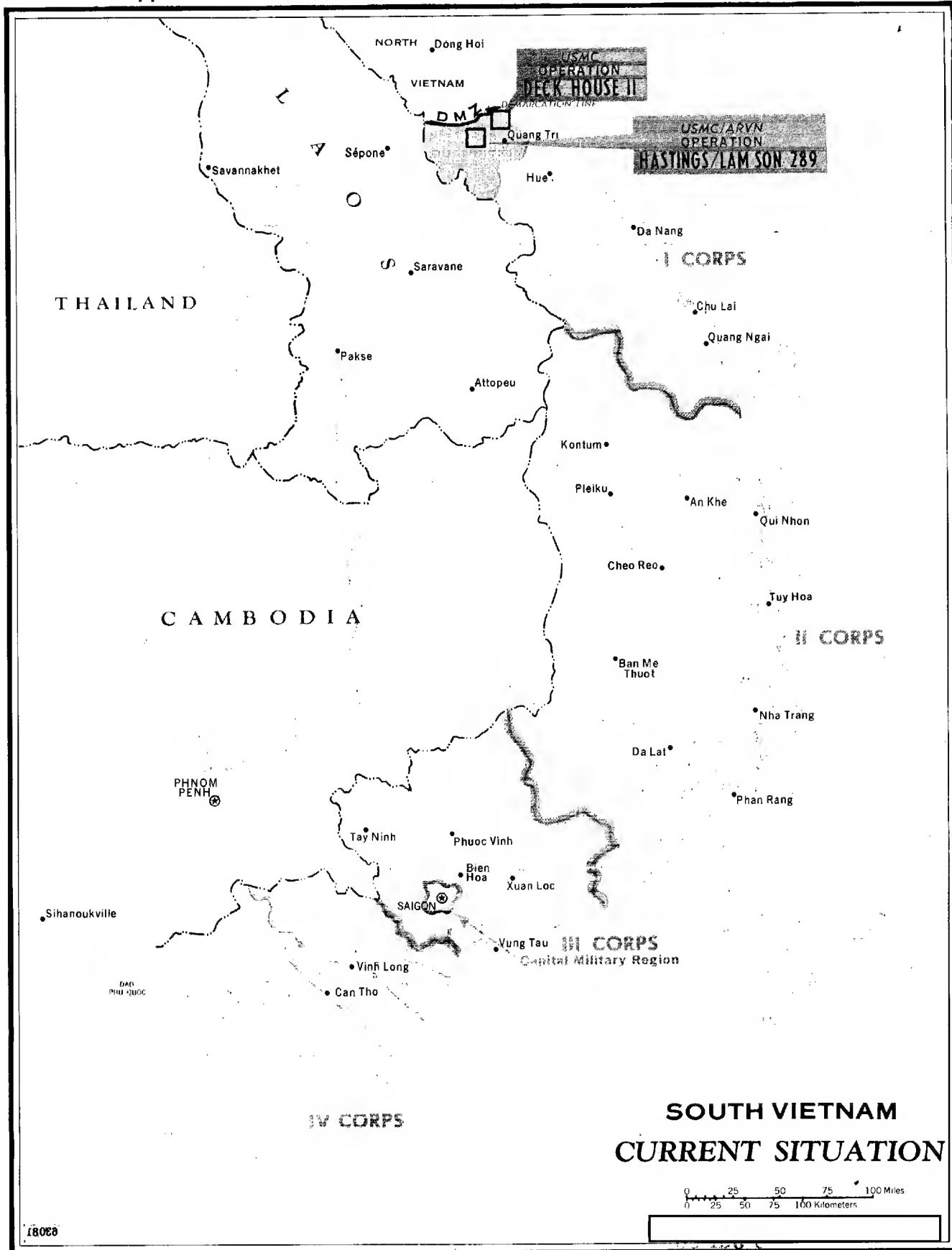
North Vietnamese Military Developments: The number of military personnel infiltrated from North Vietnam into the south during 1966 now totals nearly 30,000. Of these, some 12,000 have been confirmed and the rest are listed as either probable or possible. This figure is considerably higher than the yearly total of some 26,000 for all of 1965.

The most significant recent infiltration into South Vietnam involves elements of the 324th North Vietnamese Infantry Division. The presence of one regiment of this division--the 812th--has been confirmed in Quang Tri Province. In addition, USMACV now has accepted two other regiments of the 324th--the 803rd and the 90th--as possibly present in the province.

These units reportedly entered South Vietnam by crossing the Demilitarized Zone, the first regular North Vietnamese units reported to have utilized this route. All other units have moved around the Demilitarized Zone through Laos.

This new route has the advantage of allowing the troops to make the trip in a relatively short time. One unit reportedly took only twelve days compared with the normal trek down the Laos infiltration corridor which takes from four to six weeks. The shorter route also saves the infiltrating troops the rigors of the longer march. No cases of malaria, for example, were reported in one unit which came across the Demilitarized Zone. Groups which have come in through Laos reportedly suffer a high rate of this disease.

Military Developments in South Vietnam: In Quang Tri Province, the joint US/South Vietnamese force



which was deployed on 7 July in reaction to the presence of elements of the North Vietnamese 324th Division has encountered sporadic but heavy contact. US casualties to date in the operation, dubbed HASTINGS/LAM SON 289, are 48 killed and 117 wounded; the enemy has lost 204 killed.

Many platoon and company-size skirmishes were reported yesterday in addition to the heavy fighting between an estimated battalion-strength Communist unit and a South Vietnamese battalion which has since been reinforced. US Marines from Operation DECK HOUSE II which was terminated yesterday are being deployed to the area of Operation HASTINGS.

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Thailand - North Vietnam: [Hanoi apparently is providing formal training in North Vietnam for Thai insurgents.]

[It is known that some Thai insurgents have been receiving training in Communist China. The extent to which Hanoi and Peking may be coordinating their efforts in this field is not known.]

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NOTES

*UN - South-West Africa: [The surprise procedural decision of the UN's International Court of Justice yesterday on behalf of South Africa and its administration of the mandate over South-West Africa is likely to provoke an intense African reaction. The main African effort, after seeking a unified position in regional meetings, will probably occur in the United Nations. The action of Australian and British judges lining up in support of South Africa on the decision may harden the African position at the forthcoming Commonwealth meeting in September where the alleged British "soft policy" toward Rhodesia has already threatened to strain Commonwealth unity.]

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Syria: The five-month-old Baathist military regime in Damascus is still threatened by factionalism among its leaders. A major controversy apparently centers on the question of whether or not to develop close ties with Egyptian President Nasir. Both governments gave only low-key publicity to recent bilateral consultations in Damascus.

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Cuba: Many Cuban officials reportedly believe Castro withdrew from the limelight in May and June to prepare for some major political step. Speculation on the speech he will make on 26 July includes announcement of a decision to send "volunteers" to Vietnam or to break diplomatic relations with Peking. Although some such dramatic disclosure is possible, it seems more likely that Castro's attention has been focused on internal problems. He may well use the speech to outline new measures designed to "institutionalize" the revolution further and to strengthen the role of the Cuban Communist Party.)

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Dominican Republic: A Communist-led student group has retained its hold on the Dominican Student Federation, the official student organization at the University of Santo Domingo. The federation's elections on 15 July were marked by the usual student apathy. The Communists' victory will enable them to maintain their capability for agitation from the campus. It also ensures the group's participation in the Communist-dominated meeting of Latin American youth slated to open in Havana on 29 July.

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The Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

The Counselor and Chairman of the Policy Planning Council

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The Treasury Department

The Secretary of the Treasury

The Under Secretary of the Treasury

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The Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs)

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Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

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U.S. Rep., Military Committee and Standing Group, NATO

Supreme Allied Commander, Europe

Commander in Chief, Pacific

Commander in Chief, Atlantic

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The Director, The Joint Staff

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of Navy

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